

2013/4

30 April 2013

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in April 2013

Main talking points

A lot of consultations at the moment. Consultation on the National Curriculum drew nosily to a close earlier this month while those on secondary school accountability, school system efficiency, vocational qualifications at Key Stage 5 and apprenticeships are all due to complete in the next few weeks. Elsewhere this month, proposals for a Tech Bacc performance measure were announced, guidelines on operating performance-related pay for teachers released, another strategy Paper for the FE sector published and future funding and flexibility for HE came under the spotlight as HEFCE held its Annual Conference

Key headlines from the month

- National Curriculum. Consultation closes with subject critics out in force
- GCSE English. Ofqual consult on changes for 2014
- Maths. Government commits more money to support KS3 and A level teaching
- AS/A level. MPs debate the changes while Wales holds firm
- Tech Bacc. Government outline details of new performance measure
- Academies. Pupil numbers top 2m
- Studio Schools. 16 open, 15 coming, 13 more approved
- School holidays. The Secretary of State raises blood pressures by challenging their length
- School efficiency. Dept launch consultation
- Teachers. DfE issue guidelines to schools on managing performance related pay
- Teach First. Extends to Early Years
- Careers Guidance. Government sets out position in latest Committee Response
- National Careers Service. Celebrates its 1st birthday with a new mobile website
- National Apprenticeship Service. Moves into bed with the SFA
- Sixth Form Colleges. 10 get together for form the Maple Group
- SFA. Government confirms priorities and funding for 2013/14
- FE Guild. Latest Plan maps out steps to launch in August
- FE. New strategy puts emphasis on rigour and responsiveness
- 24+ loans. Application system now live
- ESOL. Ofqual confirm minimal changes following consultation
- Alliance of SSCs. Becomes the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards
- HE Student Numbers. Government sticks with ABB but further consultation pending
- HE-Business. Witty Review gets under way
- Moocs. 3rd platform opens at Stanford

Reports/Publications of the month (in order of publication)

- **It's about work.** Published at the end of last month, the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning mark out the distinctive features of excellent vocational learning
- **Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills.** The 2 Rs dominate the latest Skills Plan from BIS which includes the creation of an FE Commissioner to keep performance up to scratch
- **Careers Guidance for Young People.** The Government responds to the Education Committee by rejecting calls for annual school career plans but extends destination data
- **Review of Efficiency in the School System.** The DfE follows up the recent Budget notice with a rapid fire consultation on financial decision making and efficiency in schools
- **Reviewing and revising your school's approach to teachers' pay.** The DfE sends out guidance in advance of the new performance related pay system
- **Managing the expansion of the Academies Programme.** The Public Accounts Committee calls for greater funding transparency and value for money in the Academy programme
- **Improving literacy in secondary schools.** Ofsted brings together case study evidence garnered over the last year and emerges with a list of 10 principles of good practice

- **FE Guild Implementation Plan.** The planning team reveal the size of the tasks involved to get the Guild up and running by August
- **Employers are from Mars. Young people are from Venus.** CIPD and BIC report on the growing gulf in expectation between young people and employers when it comes to jobs
- **Consultation on the Removal of Speaking and Listening Assessment from GCSE Eng/Eng Lang.** Ofqual consult on separate reporting of GCSE Speaking and Listening
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships.** The BIS Select Committee complete their inquiry with a call for greater certainty and funding sustainability to help LEPs lead long-term growth
- **From GCSEs to EBCs.** The Government issues its Response to the earlier Education Committee Report and sets out the next set of stages for GCSE reform

Speeches of the month

- David Willetts's 18 April HEFCE speech confirms that the Government is looking at further flexibilities around student numbers while continuing to encourage wider access
- Michael Gove's 18 April Spectator speech suggests that longer school days and shorter school holidays may help schools raise performance levels
- Lord Heseltine's 18 April LEP Conference speech spells out how some of the vision behind his greater localism Report is beginning to be realised
- Liz Truss's 19 April Early Years speech summarises Government policy in this emerging area putting renewed emphasis on staff training and development
- Michael Gove's 25 April National College speech highlights the growing importance of teachers and offers support for the creation of a Royal College

Quotes of the month

- *"The old adage has it that there is only one thing better than having a university in your city and that is having two."* The VC of Exeter University on the importance of withstanding an avalanche of changes for HE
- *"The whole delivery system is in the process of changing and there has to be some way of saying which online courses give you what you need to know to be certified."* Bill Clinton enters the debate on Moocs
- *"We will invest in facilities, champion excellent provision and take tough action to tackle inadequate colleges."* The FE Minister on the latest injection of 'rigour' into the FE sector
- *"We are simply laying the trellises, defining the borders and marking out the footpaths."* Liz Truss on how the secret curriculum garden has been re-cultivated
- *"I think this national curriculum may well be the last national curriculum because in future teachers will be doing it for themselves."* Michael Gove looks to liberate the National Curriculum
- *"Continued good performance as defined by an individual school's pay policy should give a classroom or unqualified teacher an expectation of progression to the top of their respective pay range."* The Dept issues guidance on the new pay system for teachers

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Learn and forget.'* The Schools Minister's view of the current A level system
- *'Sushi curriculum.'* One critic condemns the new 'snatch and grab a fact' National Curriculum
- *'Hunger Games.'* What the current spending review is apparently turning into

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It is also possible to follow some of the team with [Steve Besley](#) and [Louis Coiffait](#) on Twitter, and to subscribe to our [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#) channels.